



GLOBAL PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT FROM LAND-BASED ACTIVITIES

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## WELCOME BY THE COORDINATOR

Welcome to the June edition of the *GPA Outreach* Newsletter. The countdown to Second Intergovernmental Review Meeting (IGR-2) of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land Based Activities has begun! As the meeting will be held from 16 –20 October 2006, we have 131 days to go. In this issue I would like to provide you with some brief updates on the preparations for IGR-2:

- Strengthening the GPA at Regional Level through land-based sources and activities Protocols Activities (will be available in the coming days)
- Catchments and Coast: measuring integrated management
- Financing the Implementation of the GPA

### Informal Preparatory Meeting

We are pleased to announce that the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development of the Government of France has agreed to host an informal preparatory meeting to discuss and advance the preparation of a number of official documents that will be finalized during IGR-2 in Beijing.

Due to budgetary constraints, this meeting will be a small informal one and will be conducted in English. Upon the advice of the IGR-2 High Level Steering Committee, the UNEP Regional Offices and Regional Seas Programmes, we have invited approximately 5 government representatives from each region to participate in this informal meeting. A limited number of other stakeholders will also participate.

We would like to invite all interested parties to provide their comments to the draft IGR-2 official documents as well. These documents can be found at:

<http://www.gpa.unep.org>.

### Supporting documents available

A number of supporting information documents are also being prepared in advance of IGR-2. As these become ready, they will be posted on the UNEP/GPA website.

These include:

- State of the Marine Environment: Trends and Processes
- State of the Marine Environment: A Regional Assessment
- The UNEP Report on Large Marine Ecosystems: A Perspective on Changing Conditions in LMEs of the World's Regional Seas
- Economic Valuation of LMEs
- ICARM (Integrated Coastal Area and River Basin Management) Casebook
- Strengthening the GPA at the Regional Level through Protocols on Land-based Activities

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**IGR-2**  
Beijing 2006

**Pre-register for IGR-2**

You can pre-register for IGR-2 on-line. Please pre-register early so that UNEP/GPA Coordination Office and SEPA (State Environmental Protection Administration) can process your application. Please note that after you pre-register you will need to receive an official letter of invitation from UNEP/GPA in order to proceed with your visa application.

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## WORLD OCEAN DAY

### **Saving the World's Last Frontier: Our High Seas**

Dr. Sylvia Earle  
Executive Director, Conservation International, Marine Conservation Division

and

Dan Laffoley  
Vice Chair Marine of the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas



*Dr. Sylvia Earle, Photo courtesy of Conservation International*

oceans in our increasingly relentless and destructive pursuit of the dwindling supply of seafood.

The high seas that lie beyond the 200-mile exclusive zone of each coastal nation represent Earth's true last frontier – a vast, unexplored, and virtually lawless region that covers about 64 percent of the world's oceans. The same industrial fleets that have depleted and destroyed so many continental shelf fisheries are now churning through this virgin, deep ocean wilderness, pillaging the resources and despoiling everything in their path.

Each day, fleets from a dozen or more nations scour the deep oceans with scant regulation and little oversight. They target undersea mountain ranges, oceanic ridges, and plateaus that provide the richest habitats for fish and other marine life. Massive seabed trawls with names like "canyon buster" are deployed, indicating the sheer scale involved and the damage inflicted on the delicate undersea habitat. The nets, sometimes mounted on heavy rollers, are dragged across the seabed, strip-mining everything in their path. It's the equivalent of bulldozers flattening entire forests to catch songbirds and squirrels.

Everything from ancient corals and sponges to 200-year-old fish are caught in their nets. In a single trawl, as much as five

tons of marine life can be scooped up to capture a relatively small number of high-value fish. The rest is 'bycatch' that is simply thrown away, dead or dying. What remains, deep and unseen, is the marine version of a lifeless, sterile desert.

Ironically, hunter-gatherer societies have harvested wildlife in a sustainable manner for tens of thousands of years without destroying the forests and plains that produced their prey. Today's indigenous peoples still do. The indiscriminately careless techniques used by today's high-tech, high seas hunter-gatherers, however, are completely unsustainable – and that's the tragedy. They are destroying the habitat that produces and replenishes the resource.

Beneath the waves, the high seas are out of sight and out of mind. We forget what is at stake, and we seem not to care. We safeguard about 12 percent of the world's most biologically important lands as national parks, reserves, corridors, or other forms of protection, but only a fraction of 1 percent of the oceans.

The high seas have become a marine version of the Wild West, lawless and ungoverned regions where fishery freebooters plunder at will. Given the fragility of these environments, we simply do not have the luxury of time, but we can act before it is too late. During the week of June 12, the United Nations will consider proposals on how to protect the deep oceans within the framework of the 1982 Convention on the Law of the Sea. I urge the Bush administration to support the imposition of a moratorium on deep ocean bottom trawling as a pivotal first step.

We need to establish marine protected areas and ensure management improvements across the high seas. We need to make certain that every activity – be it fishing, scientific research, minerals exploration, energy development, bio-prospecting, and others – are conducted in a sustainable manner now, and far into the future.

My sincere hope is that the next generation will look back on ours and say two things: We were really smart and realized what needed to be done for marine conservation, and we made the right moves and acted before it was too late. At stake is preventing the extinction of countless species and ecosystems that we are only just discovering, let alone beginning to understand. The next few years will be critical in deciding whether we deliver or fail. Let's act now to protect the last, vast wilderness on Earth.

*Dr. Sylvia Earle will speak at the Opening Session of the IGR-2 Ministerial Segment on 19 October 2006.*



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## GPA ISSUES UPDATE: ASSESSMENTS

### State of the Marine Environment: Trends and Processes

The Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA) calls for periodic reviews and in response to this mandate the UNEP/GPA Coordination Office commissioned this report: The State of the Marine Environment: Trends and Processes. Its purpose is to give a broad global perspective on the situation, providing regional and sometimes national examples. The report provides an overview of the current state of the coastal and marine environment in relation to the nine categories of threats outlined by the GPA.

The report often relies on information that dates back farther than the adoption of the GPA, largely because of limited contemporary data. At the same time, there exists a considerable time lag between the pressures imposed on the environment, the subsequent development of policies, the implementation of measures and, eventually, the visible manifestation of the impact of such responses. While the findings of the report may not be based on as current information as we would like, the resulting analysis is indicative of trends in the state of the marine environment as they relate to the GPA.

The report indicates that legal and institutional arrangements have been strengthened and now cover most regions of the world. In addition, ongoing programmes, including GEF supported large marine ecosystems (LME) programmes, contribute to the implementation of the GPA. Despite these heightened efforts globally, coastal and marine ecosystems continue to deteriorate mainly because of pressures by human development. Progress in dealing with the nine GPA source

categories has been uneven: progress has been made in Persistent Organic Pollutants, Radioactive Substances and Oils (Hydrocarbons), results are mixed in Heavy Metals and Sediment mobilization and conditions have worsened in Sewage, Nutrients, Marine Litter, and Physical Alteration and Destruction of Habitats.

This report informs and compliments the other studies we have produced for the Second Intergovernmental Review Meeting (IGR-2), and it provides a basis for some of the new strategic directions proposed in the Programme of Work for the UNEP/GPA Coordination Office (2007-2011). The report also aims to contribute to the Global Assessment of the Marine Environment.

The UNEP/GPA Coordination office and its partners are pleased to present this report and it is our hope that the findings presented here will further support global, regional and national efforts in implementing the Global Programme of Action.

The report is available at: <http://www.gpa.unep.org>.



### SUMMARY

- Legal and institutional arrangements have been strengthened
- Ongoing programmes, including GEF supported large marine ecosystems (LME) programmes, contribute to the implementation of the GPA.
- Despite global efforts, coastal and marine ecosystems continue to deteriorate, progress in dealing with the nine GPA source categories has been uneven.
- Progress has been good with;
  - Persistent Organic Pollutants
  - Radioactive Substances
  - Oils (Hydrocarbons),
- Results have been mixed in;
  - Heavy Metals
  - Sediment Mobilization
- Conditions have worsened in;
  - Sewage
  - Nutrients
  - Marine Litter and
  - Physical Alteration and Destruction of Habitats.



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## GPA ISSUES UPDATE: ASSESSMENTS cont.

### **The UNEP Large Marine Ecosystem (LME) Report: A Perspective on Changing Conditions in LMEs**

A partnership was developed that links the coastal and marine activities of the global Regional Seas Programme (RSP) coordinated by UNEP with the Large Marine Ecosystem (LME) approach. It focuses on the assessment and management of LMEs located in Regional Seas areas. This partnership and the GEF/LME approach to ecosystem-based management are crucial elements in the implementation of the GPA. The Regional Seas Programmes (RSPs) provide a policy framework for the regional implementation of the GPA.

Within the framework of the above-mentioned partnership, UNEP/RSP and NOAA/LME have commissioned a report intended to provide a perspective on changing conditions of the world's LMEs. It describes their ecological conditions using the five-module LME assessment framework of: productivity, fish and fisheries, pollution and ecosystem health, socioeconomics, and governance. The report illustrates the

emerging pattern of temperature fronts affecting primary productivity levels of the 64 LMEs, with special attention to those located within the Regional Seas areas. The conservation and restoration of the LMEs constitutes an integral part in the sustainable management of the marine and coastal resources, which comprises goods and services that are worth billions of dollars. Positive actions are thus required on the part of governments and civil society to restore and sustain the integrity and health of the marine and coastal environment.

The GPA's IGR-2 will address among other JPOI targets, the application of ecosystem approaches. This report will provide input to these discussions and will constitute a step forward in setting a baseline through which progress can be measured in the future and will contribute to further assessments on the state of the marine environment. The report will be widely disseminated to partners and actors in implementing the GPA and the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans.

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## CONFERENCE ROUND-UP

### **UN Fish Stocks Agreement Review Conference**

The Review Conference on the Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks (UNFSA) was held, from 22 - 26 May 2006 in New York.

The conference was called to assess the adequacy of the provisions for securing the conservation and management of straddling fish stocks and highly migratory fish stocks and, should it be deemed necessary, to propose means of strengthening the substance and methods of implementation of its provisions to better address any continuing problems in the conservation and management of the two types of stocks.

The conference was attended by the great majority of the signatories to the convention as well as a number of other interested parties.

The Review Conference considered the degree to which the UNFSA provisions have been incorporated into national laws and regulations, and the extent to which these provisions are



Picture courtesy of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

actually being implemented. The conference also addressed what action States and Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMO) are taking to remedy instances of failures to apply these provisions in practice.

All parties and non-parties to the agreement participated in a frank and forthright discussion on regional and international approaches to the conservation and management of fish stocks. At the conclusion of the conference delegates compiled a final report that, as well as other things, included; a commitment to take into account ecosystem considerations in fisheries management; a commitment to work towards approaches to fishing which will lead to changes in the methods and extent of fishing to levels more attune with the sustainability of fish stocks; the strengthening of RFMO mandates to bring about a twenty-first century approach to fishing; RFMO performance reviews; a global register of fishing vessels and the introduction of legally enforceable minimum standards for port states, and the expansion of assistance offered to developing countries.



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## STAKEHOLDER DIALOGUE

### GPA Online Dialogue

From **19-30 June**, Stakeholder Forum is hosting an online dialogue as part of its ongoing work with UNEP/GPA. The online dialogue is open to anyone with an interest in issues related to the protection of the marine environment from land-based activities. The theme of the online dialogue is **Our Expanding Urban Coast: A Threat to the Marine Environment and Human Health**.

Close to 40% of the world's population lives within 100 km of the coast; the trend towards coastal urbanization continues to grow. The health, well-being and, in some cases, very survival of coastal populations depends upon the health, and maintenance of coastal ecosystems. Yet, coastal urbanisation has a significant direct and indirect effect on the marine environment.

The online dialogue will explore the links between the marine environment, coastal urbanization and **Physical Alteration and Destruction of Habitat, Integrated Management Approaches**, and **Nutrients**, with a view to developing recommendations on processes and policies to address these issues at the global, regional, and national level, the role of GPA in addressing these issues, and the potential role of various stakeholders. The outcomes of the dialogue will input into the GPA's IGR-2, to be held in Beijing, China, on 16-20 October 2006.

**Physical Alteration and Destruction of Habitats:** With the rise of coastal urbanization, increasingly heavy demands will be placed on natural resources and habitats, which can result in the Physical Alteration and Destruction of Habitats. Unless corrective measures are taken, environmental degradation and over-exploitation will erode marine and coastal biological diversity, undermine productivity, and intensify conflicts over the increasingly scarce coastal resources. Key Questions for discussion:

- What policy instruments need to be put in place to ensure adequate safeguards against alterations and destruction of coastal resources and habitats?

- Since many habitat modifications arise from initiatives lead by private sector institutions, such as ports and harbours, aquaculture and tourism, what role would there be for private sector to contribute to the safeguarding against alterations and destruction of coastal resources and habitats?

**Integrated Management Approaches:** Integrated Coastal Management approaches encourage the coordination of local and national strategic plans. The aim of planning is to guide decision makers in allocating resources amongst competing interests. Without planning, coastal areas, which have historically supported thriving populations, may no longer be able to do so. Key questions for discussion:

- What role is there for different stakeholders in supporting integrated management approaches?
- What role can GPA play in enhancing integrated management approaches?
- How can the mainstreaming of the GPA be furthered at the global, regional and national levels?

**Nutrients:** Excess nutrients from agricultural runoff and sewage over fertilize ocean and coastal areas, leading to the creation of numerous 'dead zones' where virtually no life can exist. The number of known 'dead zones' has doubled since 1990 and is increasing as a result of accelerating urbanization and intensified agricultural-related activities. The IGR-2 will explore the necessity of proposing action at the international, regional and national policy level. As a contribution to this discussion, participants to the online dialogue may wish to consider the following questions:

- How could the Programme of Work for the GPA be strengthened to address a global policy framework for Nutrients?
- Which global and regional organisations and mechanisms could be strengthened to address nutrients?
- What types of international cooperation and partnerships could be established to address the problems of nutrients?

More information about the GPA Online Dialogue is available at: [www.stakeholderforum.org/gpa.html](http://www.stakeholderforum.org/gpa.html)

### Instructions for Registration

The online dialogue is hosted at:

<http://www.stakeholderforum.org/gpa.html>

- To participate in the online dialogue, you first need to login. Look on the left side of the page and click on 'login to online dialogue',
- If you **have done this before**, enter your username and password. Once you are logged in, click the link on the left of the page that says 'Online Dialogue' to participate.
- If you **have not done this before**, you need to register by clicking on 'Not a member yet? click here to register'.

Please fill in the registration form.

- When you have completed the form, click the button that says 'create account' you will then be asked to verify your account, if you are happy with what you have entered please click 'verify account' at the bottom of the page.
- For security purposes an email will be sent to the address you provided. Within a few moments you will receive an email from 'StakeholderForum', click on the link and you will be taken to the login page.
- Once you are logged in click the link on the left that says 'Online Dialogue' and you will be able to participate.



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## UPCOMING EVENTS

18—24 June 2006; Hong Kong, China	First Asia Pacific Coral Reef Symposium, Contact: <a href="mailto:apcrs.secretariat@cuhk.edu.hk">apcrs.secretariat@cuhk.edu.hk</a>
19—23 June 2006; Vancouver, Canada	3rd World Urban Forum, Contact: <a href="mailto:lars.reutersward@unhabitat.org">lars.reutersward@unhabitat.org</a>
27 – 28 June 2006; Paris, France	IGR-2 Preparatory Meeting, Contact: <a href="mailto:igr2@unep.nl">igr2@unep.nl</a>
21—27 August 2006; Stockholm, Sweden	World Water Week, Contact: <a href="mailto:sympos@siwi.org">sympos@siwi.org</a>
1—30 September 2006; Beijing, China	International Water Association (IWA) World Water Congress, Contact: <a href="mailto:water@iwahq.org.uk">water@iwahq.org.uk</a>
14—15 September 2006; Helsinki, Finland	6th Asia—Europe Summit Meeting (ASEM), Contact: <a href="mailto:admin@aseminforboard.org">admin@aseminforboard.org</a>
13—14 October 2006; Beijing, China	Beijing, China - 6th Global Meeting of the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans, Contact <a href="mailto:a.muchai@unep.nl">a.muchai@unep.nl</a>
16—20 October 2006; Beijing, China	The 2nd Intergovernmental Review (IGR-2) of the Global Plan of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA) Contact: <a href="mailto:igr2@unep.nl">igr2@unep.nl</a>

## About Stakeholder Forum



Stakeholder Forum for a Sustainable Future's mission is to inform, influence, promote, and advance the implementation of sustainable development. Stakeholder Forum fulfils this mission by developing and facilitating multi-stakeholder processes that engage stakeholders in the development and implementation of sustainable development policy. To support multi-stakeholder processes, Stakeholder Forum also undertakes activities related to capacity building, training, and policy development.

Stakeholder Forum is delighted to continue our partnership with UNEP GPA as we build toward the IGR-2. Stakeholder Forum is working with UNEP GPA to undertake outreach and conduct dialogue with stakeholders to ensure that the IGR-2 will gain from the experience and expertise of a broad range of stakeholders.

For more information visit [www.stakeholderforum.org](http://www.stakeholderforum.org)



The GPA was adopted in 1995 by 108 Governments and the European Commission in response to the increasing threat to the marine environment from human activities on land. The GPA is designed to be a source of conceptual and practical guidance for national and/or regional authorities for devising and implementing sustained action to prevent, reduce, control and/or eliminate marine degradation from land-based activities.

The United Nations Environment Programme acts as the secretariat for the GPA. The UNEP/GPA Coordination Office, located in The Hague, The Netherlands supports the implementation of the GPA by: promoting and facilitating the implementation of the GPA at the national level and the regional and sub-regional level and playing a catalytic role with other organisations and institutions in the implementation of the GPA at the international level.

For more information please visit [www.gpa.unep.org](http://www.gpa.unep.org)

## CONTACTS

- For GPA enquiries contact, including information about the Second Intergovernmental Review Meeting, please email [igr2@unep.nl](mailto:igr2@unep.nl) or call +31 70 311 4460.
- For further information about Stakeholder Forum or stakeholder dialogues in preparation for the IGR-2, please contact: [jpeer@stakeholderforum.org](mailto:jpeer@stakeholderforum.org). If you have been forwarded this newsletter and would like to subscribe to GPA Outreach, please email [jpeer@stakeholderforum.org](mailto:jpeer@stakeholderforum.org) to subscribe.